



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
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2023 Capital Priorities – Staff Recommendations

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PURPOSE:

1. To seek Board approval of staffs recommended list of 2023 Capital Priorities in response to the Ministry of Education call for submissions on or before 20 October 2023.

CONTEXT:

2. The Ministry's memo for this capital call is attached as Appendix A. The Ministry of Education calls for school districts' Capital Priorities to fund school facility needs. Generally, this funding is for new pupil places. Repair and renewal of existing space is funded separately, although the Capital funding can support rebuilding or substantial renovation to existing space (Broadview Public School (PS) rebuild and Elmdale Public School (PS) renovation and expansion). There is no set schedule for these capital calls.

As this process can be rather contentious with all districts and zones within districts vying for attention and funding. While the Ministry requires that we submit detailed business cases to support our priorities, there is no corresponding explanation from the Ministry about the reason a particular project was or was not funded, nor is there a multi-year plan allowing us to know when a project may be funded in the future. This has always been a concern for our long term planning.

In order to assist the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) in determining our priorities, staff compiled a "District Needs Analysis" (DNA) in 2018. The DNA looked at various geographic areas in the district to examine a number of stresses/needs. At a high level, the DNA provides current and future snapshots of the facilities inventory (from a District and community perspective) by examining a number of factors: growth pressures; trends in enrolment; gaps in program accessibility; new program initiatives; facility condition; and suitability of teaching and learning space.

The DNA also includes information regarding where additional instructional space is currently, or predicted to be required within the District, and an estimate of the timing of that need for example, either high or low enrolment.

The idea was to undertake an update to the DNA in the second year of the term of each new Board of Trustees. The second iteration of the DNA was begun in 2020 and completed at the end of 2021.

This iteration of the DNA was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and staff also struggled with some of the data.

It is always easier to come up with a capital need in a new growth area. Where divisiveness entered into the debate previously the focus of capital was typical outside the greenbelt growth versus inside.

Staff struggled to come up with a way to put some sort of value on the needs in existing pupil place stock. The only manner that we had in the first DNA was the Ministry's Facility Condition Index (FCI), which looked at a myriad of issues in existing facilities to determine their viability. It was at least some indication for staff of the issues that the DNA would examine.

In this iteration, the way the FCI was determined was altered. While this is a tool for the Ministry of Education, it is no longer a viable tool for the purposed of determining need in existing facilities for us for this sort of capital analysis.

Under FCI the buildings are judged by age, and a standard calculation of life-cycle of major components. It does not take into account our stewardship of these structures, the magic of our maintenance staff, and the diligence of custodians. Indeed, there are instances where we have found that more contemporary buildings are in greater need of attention than our old more robustly built stock. There are also challenges to the extent of renovation and refurbishment required to qualify under the Capital Priorities program verses the standard renewal and renovation funding which is separately enveloped and over which we have much more latitude.

Accordingly, the newer iteration of the DNA indicates that it is very much focused on the determination of need for new pupil places; whether it be new facilities altogether or additions to existing stock.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. On 14 August 2023, we received Memo 2023 B08 from the Ministry of Education to outline the upcoming Capital Priorities Program for 2023-24. Project proposals are to be submitted no later than 20 October 2023. Capital proposals can be for (generally) new school facilities, total deep renovation or addition to existing facilities and/or childcare space.

While the essential process remains similar to previous Capital Calls, there are some enhanced accountability requirements for each submission. As always, the

Ministry will make decisions based upon (we presume) need, availability and buildability of sites, and a geographic distribution of allocations. The Ministry has not and does not give feedback on either their methodology or rationale for approval/denial of funding.

In addition to the logical past criteria (need, availability of sites, etc.) the Province has indicated in the memo attached Appendix A that there will be consideration for French language access, a consideration of Readiness Assessment (essentially a detailed timeline), and a move towards design standardization. The OCDSB does tend to repeat our facilities design with enhancements and improvements with each design, as well as customizable elements to suit each build, but the Design Standardization spoken of in the memo attached (Appendix A) is more Province-wide. The staff has to learn more about this expectation and report back to the Board. Designs for the buildings and a more detailed cost evaluation will be part of this process.

While there are no limits to the number of submissions a school board can make (as often was the case in the past) there are practical limitations to time and the new and enhanced information required with each submission.

4. Recommended Capital Priority #1 – An Addition to Earl of March High School

The enrolment issues in Kanata at the secondary school level are a growing concern. An addition to AY Jackson Secondary School (SS) has been a submitted capital priority since 2009 but to date has not been granted.

There are 2 secondary school sites identified in the Kanata area: the first is near the Canadian Tire Centre and the second is north of Kanata Highlands Public School. Neither site is currently in the ownership of the OCDSB; neither site is currently fully serviced or buildable.

Earl of March HS has 31 portables this year, and more growth is projected. Given the site situation for new builds, staff is of the opinion that an addition to this school is our only viable option to accommodate growing needs.

Alternatives to an addition to the school have been carefully considered. First as outlined, there is no available school site in Kanata for the next secondary school within a reasonable horizon to address this need.

Second, interim or permanent measures to manage growth are not good. To manage pressures boundaries have to be changed, program has to be changed, and grade structure has to be changed or a combination of the foregoing.

To change a boundary, we would have to have an adjacent school to which students would have to be directed. The closest schools are AY Jackson SS, West Carleton SS, Bell HS or the opening of Stittsville HS.

None of the existing schools has capacity to spare for an influx of students. Stittsville HS has neither the projected capacity nor the opening grade structure to accommodate. We have challenged means to bus students anywhere let alone out of their communities.

Accordingly, we are seeking a 25 classroom permanent addition to the school. We are looking to follow a simple design with a 2 storey building with a centre hallway and classes loaded on either side. We also seek additional washroom facilities. We are mindful of the size of Earl of March HS at the moment, and are concerned with overbuilding, as we still require high schools in Kanata west and north. However, this addition is the only way we see to go forward with this urgent need. With 31 portables and continued growth projected, it is the only viable alternative.

5. Recommended Capital Priority #2 – A.Y. Jackson Secondary School Addition
A.Y. Jackson SS is a smaller urban facility with a building capacity of 759 pupil places. The school is located in the former City of Kanata within the neighborhood of Glen Cairn.

Over the past decade A.Y. Jackson SS has required the use of between 7 and 8 portables to accommodate its grade 9 to 12 student population. During this period of time total enrolment at the school has been in the 700 to 800 range.

There are three residential growth areas located within the core A.Y. Jackson SS attendance boundary: Monahan Landing; Soho; and Bridlewood Trails. Construction in these development areas is ongoing.

Secondary school students from the above developments will serve to place additional accommodation pressures on space requirements at A.Y. Jackson SS in future years.

Given projected enrolments for the school, it is anticipated that closer to 12 portables will be required on site to support enrolment growth at the school. An addition would increase the size of the school to over 1,000 pupil places, reducing the need for portables and making it more functional in the longer-term.

6. Recommended Capital Priority #3 - Viscount Alexander Public School Addition
Viscount Alexander PS is located in an older, more mature part of the District (the Sandy Hill neighborhood) and serves students from kindergarten to grade 6. The school building has a pupil capacity of 188. It is currently operating at 99% capacity (186 students), but requires the use of three portable classrooms.

Enrolment is forecast to increase gradually over the next five years reaching 223 students and an estimated need for six portables for 2022 (the site's maximum number).

An addition to Viscount Alexander PS would provide a solution to a number of local issues; appropriate program space for the school's Full-Day Kindergarten program; an elimination of the need for portables on site; and flexibility to accommodate future enrolment fluctuations and students generated from the nearby Greystone Village development.

As part of the District's multi-year plan, a pupil accommodation review of Centretown and surrounding areas is scheduled to take place in the near future. Viscount Alexander PS will be included in this review.

7. Recommended Capital Priority #4 - New East Urban Centre Elementary School
The East Urban Centre (EUC) CDP area is located within the southern portion of the western half of Orleans. This part of the District includes a significant amount of on-going and future new residential development. New residential development at full build-out is expected to be in excess of 7,000 homes. Approximately 2,700 units have been built to date and there are 230 kindergarten to grade 8 students attending OCDSB schools.

Elementary panel students in this growth area are directed to attend schools located outside of the community in Blackburn Hamlet: Glen Ogilvie ES for kindergarten to grade 5; and Emily Carr Middle School for grades 6 to 8. Both of these schools are operating in the 70% utilization range currently and are not expected to experience pressures accommodating students from the EUC for some time.

The DNA identifies 2022 as the year when a new elementary school to serve students within their community is needed. Given the projected impact of a new school on enrolments at Glen Ogilvie Elementary School and Emily Carr Middle School, some form of consolidation should likely be considered.

8. Recommended Capital Priority #5- New Riverside South Elementary School #2
The Riverside South community is expected to contain in excess of 20,000 homes at full build-out. To date there are approximately 5,600 homes built and occupied.

Steve MacLean PS opened in 2006 and received an addition a few years later. Its current attendance boundary is about to change to a more sustainable one, with the intermediate grades going to the new Riverside South HS and the whole of the community redirected to SMPS for K-6 (redirected from Farley Mowat PS)

While this boundary is sustainable in the shorter term, there will be increasing pressure from the growth area south of Armstrong Road. The second elementary school is needed to serve this area as it grows.

SUMMARY

9. The projects above, with the exception of an addition at Earl of March HS are all repeat submissions that have been discussed and approved by previous Boards of Trustees and are still justified under the DNA.

We did consider other projects. There is a growing need for an additional elementary school in the Stittsville area, but there are also opportunities with the opening of the new Stittsville HS to rework some boundaries. As such, staff feels that while we have identified this growing need to the Ministry, the criteria of having no available space in abutting school boundaries might be questioned. It does not meet the current criteria for submission.

Staff also acknowledge the need and pressures for another high school in Kanata north and west. As the sites are unavailable at this time, it seems futile to put the projects on the list. While the pressure must be dealt with at Earl of March HS,

we feel the addition suggested is measured enough not to negatively impact the projects in the future.

There is significant need for a new secondary school in the Barrhaven area, with needs particularly acute in the John McCrae Secondary School catchment. We do have a high school site set aside in the Cambrian Road area. The property has been optioned for purchase, but until we have the site secured we have relied on discussing this need with the Ministry and knowing that in the next round it will be a high priority.

We have also considered carefully whether or not an addition is required at inside-the-greenbelt schools such as Pleasant Park PS. At the moment, the pressure there is managed and there may be reason to consider the program offerings in a broader study before adding to the space.

All of the new elementary school projects have childcare components.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

10. Costs incurred for the consultative process were managed within existing departmental budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the following capital priorities be submitted to the Ministry of Education in response to the 2023/2024 Capital Call:

An addition to Earl of March High School;
An addition to AY Jackson Secondary School;
An addition to Viscount Alexander Public School;
A new elementary school in the East Urban Community; and,
A new elementary school in Riverside South.

All of the input received as part of the capital priorities-setting consultation process has been provided to trustees in its original form.

Randall Gerrior
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Pino Buffone
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A